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SUBJECT: PARAGUAY SUPPORTS VENEZUELA'S ENTRY INTO MERCOSUR

REF: A. CARACAS 1816

[1](#)B. BRASILIA 2243

[1](#)C. CARACAS 2363

[1](#)1. On April 2, local media reported that Paraguayan Foreign Minister Ruben Ramirez expressed Paraguay's support for Venezuela's full membership into the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), during his recent trip to Caracas. According to ABN, the official BRV news agency, during the signing of food and energy cooperation agreements April 1, 2007 with BRV Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro, Ramirez said "since Venezuela is an energy power and plays a leading role in regional issues, it is essential for MERCOSUR to admit Venezuela as a full member". Ramirez also reportedly stated that the Paraguayan President Nicanor Duarte "is a firm supporter of Venezuela's MERCOSUR membership".

[1](#)2. In July 2006, MERCOSUR's member states, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay signed a protocol to admit Venezuela as a full member, but Venezuela needs the legislative bodies of the member states to approve the protocol. Neither Paraguay's and Brazil's legislative bodies have approved the protocol. According to Ramirez the Paraguayan parliament is discussing the issue and the government of Paraguay is urging approval of Venezuela's membership.

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